The Genius Guide to: The Vanguard

Revised

One of the greatest challenges for any fantasy roleplaying game is finding a way to translate the essence of legends, folktales, and fiction into a set of balanced and playable rules. Perhaps the trickiest area for this effort is that intersection of mundane melee combat and magical abilities. The classic tales we all know abound with heroes who mix swordplay and spellcasting, excelling at both but yet remaining believable, appropriately powered members of their worlds, but game rules often have a difficult time allowing a single character access to both martial and arcane traits without having them become overpowered.

The vanguard is a new base class, designed for use with the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*. The class blends martial and arcane power, focusing the character's skill and effort into mastering a single weapon with which he has a strong arcane bond. Spellcasting and martial combat become merged for the vanguard in a way that presents balanced game mechanics in a satisfying conceptual package. You can see in both his powers and their limitations echoes of the magical warriors whose exploits first fired our fascination with fantasy fiction and brought us to the gaming hobby in hopes of forging such adventures for ourselves.

THE VANGUARD

Vanguards are accomplished with both weapons and spells. They also possess a number of signature class abilities and can combine raw spell power and combat ability into an effective and unified whole. This makes the vanguard versatile and, perhaps more importantly, highly adaptable to just about any situation, both in and out of combat. While the vanguard might not be

able to match the raw damage output of a fighter or the pure spell potential of a wizard or sorcerer, he more than makes up for this in sheer flexibility. This is not to say that a vanguard fails to be a viable spellcaster or warrior, however! The vanguard can still rush into combat and bravely stand shoulder to shoulder with the fighter or paladin on the front line, although he will most likely not have the same resilience or staying power that they do. He can also sling arcane spells with enough skill to earn the respect of even the most jaded wizard or sorcerer, but he will certainly run out of his spells long before either of his purely magical companions do and he will never be able to learn their most powerful spells. The vanguard's true power lies in the close synergy which comes from the merging of his combat prowess and arcane magic in altogether new, interesting, and unique ways.

The vanguard forms a deep and powerful arcane bond with his weapon and, over time, unlocks increasingly more formidable ways of combining his spells and fighting abilities. The specific type of arcane bond weapon chosen is extremely important and, once selected, cannot be changed. In fact, together with spell selection, it is the most important choice the vanguard must make and one that will profoundly impact the character for the whole of his career. The weapon selected greatly affects the overall feel the vanguard will have. This actually allows for a great deal of variation among different vanguard characters and helps to insure that no two vanguards are exactly the same. A vanguard that chooses the long bow for his arcane bond, for examples has a very different feel from one with a sword or for his arcane bond weapon, and one with a great axe would be different from either one!

TABLE 1: THE VANGUARD

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells Per Day					
						1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Arcane bond weapon, arcane strike, cantrips, vanguard blast 2d4	1	—	—	—	—	—
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Combat casting, iron grip	2	—	—	—	—	—
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	Vanguard tactics, weapon channel (touch spells)	3	—	—	—	—	—
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	Spell maneuver, vanguard blast 3d4	3	1	—	—	—	—
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Vanguard's spell penetration	4	2	—	—	—	—
6	+4	+5	+2	+5	Swift spell 1/day	4	3	—	—	—	—
7	+5	+5	+2	+5	Spell maneuver, vanguard blast 4d4	4	3	1	—	—	—
8	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	Arcane smite	4	4	2	—	—	—
9	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	Enhance bond weapon, swift spell 2/day	5	4	3	—	—	—
10	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Spell maneuver, weapon channel (save spell), vanguard blast 5d4	5	4	3	1	—	—
11	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	Vanguard's spell penetration +2	5	4	4	2	—	—
12	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Swift spell 3/day	5	5	4	3	—	—
13	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Spell maneuver, vanguard blast 6d4	5	5	4	3	1	—
14	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9	Weapon channel (full attack)	5	5	4	4	2	—
15	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	Swift spell 4/day	5	5	5	4	3	—
16	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Spell maneuver, vanguard blast 7d4	5	5	5	4	3	1
17	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Vanguard's spell penetration +4	5	5	5	4	4	2
18	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	Swift spell 5/day	5	5	5	5	4	3
19	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	Spell maneuver, vanguard blast 8d4	5	5	5	5	5	4
20	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Bond weapon mastery	5	5	5	5	5	5

Role: Vanguards rely on mobility and tactical knowledge as much as their skills with weapons and spells in combat. In fact, because of their typically high intelligence and keen battle sense, most vanguards tend to be very skilled tacticians. In combat, they carefully consider their many options before boldly executing a battle plan. Although rarely reckless, vanguards tend to be among the first into a battle, many times actually leading a charge (after first using protective and utility spells to their best advantage, of course). Very few vanguards are overtly boastful. However, they do tend to think of themselves as belonging to an elite class of warrior and often have a great deal of pride in themselves, their unique abilities, and the vanguard traditions.

While a vanguard can certainly take the role of a party's main warrior or primary arcane spell caster, he is often much more effective in a group in which he can be flexible in how he supports the party, switching from a direct combat role to a spellcasting one as each situation warrants. Because the vanguard can deal considerable amounts of damage but lacks long-term staying power, he often takes the role of point-man. By being in front, the vanguard can use his spells, weapon, and armor to strike a harsh blow to an enemy force quickly, softening up major targets or eliminating minor enemies, thus clearing a path for his party's main combatant to do severe damage to the major foes, and freeing his party's main spellcaster to focus on complicated magics rather than worrying about crowd control.

Alignment: Any. While their flexible powers and independent nature often appeal strongly to chaotic characters, vanguards have no alignment restrictions.

Hit Die: d8.

CLASS SKILLS

The vanguard's class skills are Appraise (Int), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Fly (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (dungeoneering) (Int), Knowledge (engineering) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Linguistics (Int), Perception (Wis), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), Stealth (Dex), Survival (Wis), and Swim (Str).

Skill Ranks per Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Starting Wealth: 3d6 x 10 gp.

Table 2: Vanguard Spells Known							
Class Level	**Maximum Spells Known**						
	0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
1	4	2	—	—	—	—	—
2	5	2	—	—	—	—	—
3	5	3	—	—	—	—	—
4	5	3	2	—	—	—	—
5	5	4	3	—	—	—	—
6	5	4	4	—	—	—	—
7	5	4	4	2	—	—	—
8	5	5	4	3	—	—	—
9	6	5	4	4	—	—	—
10	6	5	4	4	2	—	—
11	6	5	5	4	3	—	—
12	6	5	5	4	4	—	—
13	6	5	5	4	4	2	—
14	6	5	5	5	4	3	—
15	6	5	5	5	4	4	—
16	6	5	5	5	4	4	2
17	6	5	5	5	5	4	3
18	6	5	5	5	5	4	4
19	6	5	5	5	5	5	4
20	6	5	5	5	5	5	5

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the vanguard.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A vanguard is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. Vanguards are also proficient with light armor and shields (except tower shields). A vanguard can cast spells while wearing light armor and carrying a shield (other than a tower shield) without incurring the normal arcane spell failure chance. Like any other arcane spellcaster, a vanguard wearing medium or heavy armor or carrying a tower shield incurs a chance of arcane spell failure if the spell in question has a somatic component. A multiclass vanguard still incurs the normal arcane spell failure chance for arcane spells received from other classes.

Spells: A vanguard casts arcane spells drawn from the wizard/sorcerer spell list. He can cast any spell he knows without preparing it ahead of time. To learn or cast a spell, a vanguard must have a Charisma score equal to at least 10 + the spell level. The Difficulty Class for a saving throw against a vanguard's spell is 10 + the spell level + the vanguard's Charisma modifier.

Like other spellcasters, a vanguard can cast only a certain number of spells of each spell level per day. His base daily spell allotment

is shown on "Table 1: The Vanguard." In addition, he receives bonus spells per day if he has a high Charisma score.

The vanguard's selection of spells is limited. A vanguard begins play knowing four 0-level spells and two 1st-level spells of his choice. At each new vanguard level, he gains one or more new spells known, as indicated on "Table 2: Vanguard Spells Known." (Unlike spells per day, the number of spells a vanguard knows is not affected by his Charisma score. The numbers on Table 2 are fixed.)

Upon reaching 5th level, and at every third vanguard level after that (8th, 11th, and so on), a vanguard can choose to learn a new spell in place of one he already knows. In effect, the vanguard "loses" the old spell in exchange for the new one. The new spell's level must be the same as that of the spell being exchanged and it must be at least one level lower than the highest-level spell the vanguard can cast. A vanguard may swap only a single spell at a given level and must choose whether or not to swap the spell at the same time that he gains new spells known for that level.

A vanguard need not prepare his spells in advance. He can cast any spell he knows at any time, assuming he has not yet used up his allotment of spells per day for the spell's level.

Cantrips: Vanguards learn a number of cantrips (or 0-level spells) as noted on "Table 1: Vanguard Spells Known." These spells are cast like any other spell, but they do not consume any slots and may be used again.

Vanguard Blast (Sp): As a standard action a vanguard can unleash a single bolt of arcane force that automatically strikes a single foe. Except as noted below, this ability acts as a magic missile spell. The vanguard blast deals 2d4 points of force damage plus an additional 1d4 for every three additional vanguard levels (2d4 at 1st, 3d4 at 4th, 4d4 at 7th and so on) to a maximum of 8d4 at 19th level. The vanguard must be in physical contact with his arcane bond weapon in order to use this ability. A vanguard can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier.

At 2nd level, a vanguard may choose to have his vanguard blast deal fire or cold damage, rather than be a force effect. At 5th level, he may choose for it to deal electric damage. At 10th level, he may choose for it to deal acid or sonic damage. The vanguard must make this decision immediately when he gains a new level, and cannot change it until he gains his next level.

Arcane Bond Weapon (Ex): At 1st level, a vanguard forms a powerful bond with a specific weapon. Should the vanguard ever have to replace the weapon (see below), he must choose another weapon of the same kind (longsword, dagger, short bow, etc.).

This bond allows the vanguard to meld his arcane powers with his fighting ability. It also serves as an increasingly powerful magical weapon. The vanguard begins play with his bonded weapon at no cost. This weapon is of masterwork quality, although it is not made of any special material. The vanguard must wield his bonded weapon in order to make use of its abilities. If a vanguard ever attempts to cast a spell without having his bonded weapon in hand, he must make a concentration check or lose the spell. The DC for this check is equal to 20 + the spell's level.

When holding his bonded weapon, the vanguard is treated as having the Eschew Materials feat, allowing him to cast any spell with a material component costing 1 gp or less without needing that component (his bonded weapon effectively takes the place of the material component). He may also cast spells that normally require somatic components solely through arcane gestures made using his bonded weapon. This allows the vanguard to cast spells while wielding his bonded weapon and still leaves his other hand free to handle a shield or other item.

Beginning at 5th level a vanguard can add additional magic abilities to his bonded weapon as if he had the Craft Magic Arms and Armor feat. This takes half the time of normal magic item creation but still incurs the full cost. The magic properties of a bonded weapon, including any magic abilities added to it, only function for the vanguard who owns it. If a bonded weapon's owner dies, or the vanguard is separated from his bonded weapon and forced to replace it, the weapon reverts to being an ordinary masterwork weapon.

If a bonded weapon is damaged, it is restored to full hit points the next time the vanguard rests and regains his spell slots for the day. If the bonded weapon is lost or destroyed, it can be replaced after 1 week in a special ritual that costs 100 gp per vanguard level plus the cost of the masterwork weapon. This ritual takes 8 hours to complete. A weapon replaced in this way possesses all the additional enchantments of the previous bonded weapon. A vanguard can designate an existing magic weapon to be his bonded weapon. This functions in the same way as replacing a lost or destroyed item except that the new magic weapon retains its abilities while gaining the standard benefits and drawbacks of being a bonded weapon; however it does not gain any of the additional enhancements that had been placed on the old bonded weapon.

Arcane Strike: At 1st level, a vanguard gains Arcane Strike as a bonus feat.

Combat Casting: At 2nd level, a vanguard gains Combat Casting as a bonus feat.

Iron Grip (Ex): At 2nd level vanguard adds a bonus equal to half his vanguard level to his CMD when defending against opponents' attempts to disarm or sunder his bonded weapon.

Weapon Channel (Su): As a standard action, a vanguard of 3rd level or higher can cast a spell with a range of touch and deliver it through an attack with his bonded weapon. Touch spells channeled in this way must have a casting time of one standard action or less. If the vanguard hits with his bonded weapon, he does damage normally and then the touch spell is resolved. If the vanguard's attack misses, the spell is lost.

Channeling touch spells in this way does not provoke an attack of opportunity. As with any touch spell, a channeled spell deals double damage on a successful critical hit.

A channeled spell may not be enhanced or otherwise altered by metamagic feats.

At 10th level, a vanguard may make a concentration check as if casting defensively (DC 15 + double the spell's level) in order to avoid losing the spell if the attack misses.

The vanguard can make other attacks (using other weapons) and take other actions without using the touch spell, but if he casts another spell or stops wielding his bonded weapon, the channeled spell is lost.

At 14th level, a vanguard can use his weapon channel ability as part of a full attack action. The spell affects every target the weapon hits during the round and then concludes at the end of that round. In addition, spells the vanguard channels are no longer lost if the attack misses.

Vanguard's Tactics (Ex): Beginning at 3rd level, as a full round action a vanguard may grant a circumstance bonus equal to his Int bonus to critical hit confirmation rolls, combat maneuver checks, Spellcraft checks, and initiative checks to all allies within 30 feet who can see and hear him. He may also grant any single teamwork feat that he knows to these same allies.

The vanguard's allies do not need to meet the prerequisites for this teamwork feat.

These bonuses last for three rounds, but end immediately if the vanguard is killed or otherwise prevented from taking actions (such as being dazed, helpless, or stunned).

Spell Maneuvers (Su): Beginning at 4th level, the vanguard gains special spell maneuvers, allowing him to use his mastery of both combat and spellcasting to use magic in ways others can't. The vanguard gains a single spell maneuver at 4th level, and an additional maneuver every 3 levels, to a maximum of 6 at 19th level.

Advanced Maneuvers: The vanguard gains a bonus feat. He can choose a metamagic feat, a teamwork feat, a combat feat, or Spell Focus. The vanguard must still meet all prerequisites for a bonus feat, including caster level minimums. These bonus feats are in addition to the feats that a character of any class gets from advancing levels. The vanguard may select this spell maneuver more than once.

Blast Trick (Ex): As a full-round action, the vanguard can change the damage type of his vanguard blast. He must choose from a damage type he could have selected when he gained his current level. The energy type remains until the vanguard changes it again, or he regains his spells for the day.). The vanguard may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier (minimum 1).

Power Casting (Su): The vanguard can force more eldritch energy into his spellcasting than the spells are intended to handle. Only spells with a casting time of 1 standard action or less can be power cast, and they gain a casting time of 1 round. If any ability is used to reduce this casting time, the vanguard does not gain the benefits of power casting. When a vanguard power casts a spell, he treats his caster level as if it was 2 higher when determining the spell's effects, and takes a -4 penalty to any concentration check made to cast it defensively. The vanguard may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier (minimum 1).

Spell Block (Su): As an immediate action the vanguard can attempt to block certain spells with his arcane bond weapon. This is treated as though the vanguard was using a quickened dispel magic with the changes noted below.

The vanguard must make a dispel check (1d20 + caster level) with a DC equal to 11 + the caster level of the spell being blocked. If the check fails, the spell effects are resolved as normal against the vanguard. If the check is successful, the spell has no effect on the vanguard, although it could still affect others if they would normally be affected (such as if they were also targeted by the spell, or are in its area). The vanguard may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier (minimum 1).

Using spell block counts against the number of attacks of opportunity the vanguard can take in a round, and a vanguard unable to take an attack of opportunity (such as if helpless, stunned, or immobilized) cannot use spell block. A vanguard must be at least 7th level to select spell block.

Spell Charge (Su): The vanguard can cast a spell as part of a charge, in place of the melee attack. The vanguard gains a +2 bonus to a concentration check to cast this spell defensively, and treats his caster level as if it were 1 higher when determining the spell's effects (and suffers the normal -2 penalty to AC for charging). The vanguard

may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier (minimum 1).

Spell Grapple (Su): When the vanguard successfully uses his spell block ability, he stores the blocked spell in his bonded weapon. As a full round action, the vanguard can release the stored spell, making all decisions necessary to cast it and using his own caster level and ability scores. The vanguard can only store a single spell in his bonded weapon at a time, and any stored spell is lost when the vanguard sleeps (or if he is knocked unconscious). A vanguard must have selected spell block before selecting this spell maneuver.

Spell Mobility (Su): Often in the forefront of a battle, the vanguard has learned to call upon the raw power of his spells to augment his ability to move into and through difficult situations. As a swift action the vanguard can sacrifice a spell slot to gain a bonus to all ability checks or skill checks based on Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution for a limited period of time. The vanguard receives an enhancement bonus to such checks equal to the level of spell slot sacrificed, and the bonus lasts for 10 minutes per caster level.

Spell Rush (Su): When the vanguard uses his spell charge ability, any target of the spell he casts as part of his charge that fails a saving throw against the spell is pushed back 5 feet, +5 feet for every 2 by which its saving throw failed to meet the save DC. A vanguard must have selected spell charge before selecting this spell maneuver.

Spell Sunder (Su): The vanguard can attempt to dispel spell effects with his arcane bonded weapon. As a standard action the vanguard attacks one target with his bonded weapon. If the attack succeeds, the weapon deals normal damage and the vanguard makes a dispel check (1d20 + caster level) with a DC equal to 11 + the caster level of the spell effect being sundered. This acts as the targeted dispel use of dispel magic and counts as a use of the vanguard's spell block ability. A vanguard must be at least 13th level and have selected spell block before selecting this spell maneuver.

Vanguard's Spell Penetration (Su): At 5th level any enhancement bonus to attack rolls the vanguard has with his bonded weapon is also added to all caster level checks he makes to overcome a creature's spell resistance. This bonus stacks with the Spell Penetration and Greater Spell Penetration feats.

At 11th level, the vanguard gains an additional +2 bonus to caster level checks made to penetrate spell resistance when wielding his bonded weapon, and at 17th level this bonus increases to +4.

Swift Spell (Sp): Beginning at 6th level, once per day a vanguard wielding his bonded weapon may cast a single spell that he knows as a swift action. Only spells with a casting time of one standard action or less may be cast in this way. He gains one additional daily use of this ability at 9th, 12th, 15th, and 18th level.

Arcane Smite (Su): Beginning at 8th level, as a standard action a vanguard may expend a spell slot to store raw magical energy in his bonded weapon. The next time he attacks with his bonded weapon, this magical energy is discharged, adding +1d6 damage to the attack per level of the spell slot expended (+1d6 for a first level spell, +2d6 for a second level spell, etc.). If the vanguard's attack misses, the spell energy is expended with no effect. This damage is of the same type as his vanguard blast ability.

At 11th level, a vanguard can use Arcane Smite as a move action instead of a standard action. At 12th level, a vanguard can use Arcane Smite as a swift action.

Enhance Bond Weapon (Su): As a standard action, a vanguard of 9th level or higher may enhance his bonded weapon by adding one of the following weapon qualities: defending, flaming, frost, ghost touch, shock or thundering. The vanguard may only have one such quality in effect at a time, though he can switch from one weapon quality to another as a move action. He may dismiss the enhancement entirely as a free action. The vanguard may use this ability for a number of rounds per day equal to his class level. These rounds do not need to be consecutive.

Bond Weapon Mastery (Su): A vanguard of 20th level or higher automatically confirms all critical threats with his bonded weapon. Also, his bonded weapon can no longer be the target of disarm or sunder attacks.

NEW FEATS

Although the following new feats are designed for use by the vanguard, they are also suitable for other classes and the GM may want to make them widely available in any Pathfinder game.

ARCANE DEFENSE

Your raw arcane power can protect you in times of need.

Prerequisites: Arcane bond class feature (bond must be to a weapon), base attack bonus +3, caster level 5th.

Benefit: As a swift action, you may expend any one prepared spell or spell slot to create a protective magical aura around you. This grants a circumstance bonus to your armor class equal to the level of the spell expended (+1 bonus for a first level spell, +2 for a second level spell, etc.) The bonus lasts for 2 rounds, +1/round per five caster levels. You must be in physical contact with your arcane bond weapon in order to use this feat. If you cease to be in contact with your arcane bond weapon for any reason, the effect immediately ends.

EXTRA ENHANCEMENTS

You can enhance your arcane bond weapon more often than normal.

Prerequisite: Enhance arcane bond weapon class feature.

Benefit: You may use your enhance arcane bond weapon ability an additional six rounds per day.

Special: You can gain Extra Enhancements multiple times. Its effects stack.

EXTRA SWIFT SPELL

You can use your swift spell ability more often.

Prerequisite: Swift spell class feature

Benefit: You can use your swift spell ability two additional times per day.

Special: You can gain Extra Swift Spell multiple times. Its effects stack.

GREATER ARCANE SMITE

Your arcane smite attacks are particularly potent and devastating.

Prerequisite: Improved Arcane Smite.

Benefit: You deal an additional 2d6 points of damage whenever you use arcane smite. You must use a spell of at least 1st level to gain any damage bonus with your arcane smite.

IMPROVED ARCANE SMITE

You are unusually adept at hitting enemies with your arcane smite attacks.

Prerequisites: Arcane smite class feature, base attack bonus +7, arcane caster level 10th.

Benefit: When using arcane smite, you receive a bonus to attack equal to the level of the spell you have expended (+1 for a 1st level spell, +2 for a 2nd level spell etc.). You do not lose the spell energy if the attack misses.

IMPROVED SPELL BLOCK

You are more adept at blocking spells with your arcane bond weapon.

Prerequisite: Spell block class feature

Benefit: You get a +4 bonus on *dispel* checks made to counterspell with your arcane bond weapon.

IMPROVED VANGUARD BLAST

Your vanguard blasts deal additional damage.

Prerequisite: Vanguard blast class feature

Benefit: Damage from your vanguard blasts deal +2d4 points of damage (to a maximum of 10d4 at 19th level).

IMPROVED WEAPON CHANNEL

You are especially skilled at manipulating spells channeled through your arcane bond weapon.

Prerequisite: Weapon channel class feature

Benefit: You can apply any one metamagic feat that you know to a spell you are about to channel into your arcane bond weapon. Although improving the channeled spell in this way does not increase its casting time, you still must use up the appropriate higher-level spell slot. You cannot channel a spell whose modified spell level would be above the level of the highest-level spell that you are capable of casting.

Normal: Spells used with the weapon channel class ability may not be enhanced or otherwise altered by metamagic feats.

VANGUARD HERITAGE

You are descended from a long line of vanguards, and some portion of their power flows in your veins.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, Vanguard 3.

Benefit: Select one sorcerer bloodline. This bloodline cannot be a bloodline you already have. You gain the 1st level bloodline power for the selected bloodline. For purposes of

using that power, treat your sorcerer level as equal to your vanguard class level.

Special: You can take this feat multiple times; each time you take this feat, you gain the next bloodline power in that bloodline's progression, as long as your vanguard level meets the level a sorcerer would gain that ability.

VANGUARD'S GRIP

It is extremely difficult to disarm or sunder your arcane bond weapon.

Prerequisites: Iron grip class feature, Defensive Combat Training, arcane caster level 9th.

Benefit: You gain an additional +2 bonus to your CMD when defending against opponents' attempts to disarm or sunder your bonded weapon. In addition, if any opponent fails an attempted combat maneuver against you, he provokes an attack of opportunity from you, even if he is using an ability or feat such as grab or Improved Disarm. You receive a circumstance bonus to damage on any such attack of opportunity equal to your iron grip bonus.

NEW SPELLS

Although the following new spells are designed for use by the vanguard, they are also suitable for other spellcasters and the GM may want to make them widely available in any Pathfinder game.

2nd-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells
Conjuration

Summon Arcane Bond Object: Summons your near-by arcane bond object to you.

5th-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells
Conjuration

Summon Arcane Bond Object, Greater: Summons your arcane bond object directly to your hand from virtually any location.

SUMMON ARCANE BOND OBJECT

School: conjuration (summoning); Level: sorcerer/wizard 2
Casting Time: 1 round
Components: V, S
Range: see text
Target: your arcane bond object
Duration: instantaneous
Saving Throw: none; Spell Resistance: no

If you possess an arcane bond object (as opposed to a familiar) this spell can summon it to you, causing your arcane bond object to appear in your hands or at your feet (your choice). You can't use this spell to summon any other object, including another caster's arcane bond object. You must have a direct line of sight to your arcane bond object and it must be unattended.

You can summon your arcane bond object from a distance of up to 5 feet per level you have in the class that grants your arcane bond object. You get a +2 bonus to the concentration check necessary to cast this spell without having your arcane bond object in hand.

SUMMON ARCANE BOND OBJECT, GREATER

School: conjuration (teleportation); Level: sorcerer/wizard 5
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V, S, M (black diamond worth 1,000 gp)
Range: see text
Target: your arcane bond object
Duration: instantaneous
Saving Throw: none; Spell Resistance: no

You can call your arcane bond object directly to your hand from virtually any location. When the spell is cast, your arcane bond object appears instantly in your hand. You get a +4 bonus to the concentration check necessary to cast this spell without having your arcane bond object in hand.

The arcane bond object can be summoned from anywhere on the same plane that you are on, but only if no other creature is physically in possession of it. If your arcane bond object is in the physical possession of another creature, the spell does not work but you instantly gain knowledge of who the possessor is and roughly where that creature is located.

DO WE REALLY NEED VANGUARDS AND ARCHONS?

Fans of the Genius Guide line are likely aware that we have already presented a base class that mixes arcane spells and martial prowess in the form of the archon class, from the Genius Guide to the Archon, and since the original release of the vanguard a new fighting-spellcaster class, the magus, has been introduced in the official game rules.

It's a natural question (and one that came up in playtesting) to ask whether a campaign really needs both the archon and the vanguard, and is either necessary now that the magus exists? To which the answer is, of course not. Just like you don't need both the sorcerer and wizard, both the cleric and oracle, or both the cavalier and the paladin. But if you want a broad range of options for players, the archon, magus, and vanguard produce very different types of play experience and can co-exist in a single party without the characters feeling like repetitive duplicates of one another.

The most basic difference between the three is obvious—the archon has a higher attack bonus and must prepare spells in advance while the magus has a lower attack (but still prepares spells) and the vanguard is a spontaneous caster. In truth, the differences run significantly deeper. The archon's class abilities are built around adapting spells to work better for a weapon-based combatant, especially with his rivenspell abilities. The magus is closer to a sword-specialized wizard, and has an entire suite of powers with his arcane pool than can alter either his combat or his spellcasting options. The vanguard actually uses the trappings of martial combat to enhance his spell ability, primarily through his bonded weapon and spell maneuvers, and is closer to a sorcerer with a weapon-based bloodline than a fighting wizard. While there will obviously be some overlap between the three, they operate very differently in combat and offer different benefits to any adventuring party that includes them.

WE ERR ON THE SIDE OF AWESOME!
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